

26 December 1963

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Cyprus

1. The situation in Nicosia deteriorated progressively on 23, 24 and 25 December with the police reportedly losing control over the situation to extremist groups of irregulars in both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. On the evening of the 25th, a cease-fire went into effect--to be supervised by the British--but, on the morning of 26 December, firing broke out again.

2. Most of the fighting appears to have taken place in the Turkish Cypriot areas of Nicosia. Reports from Turkey claim these areas of Nicosia are low on food, medical supplies and water. There are no confirmed statistics on casualties but they are believed to number several hundred. Most observers believe the Turkish Cypriots have suffered far heavier casualties than the Greeks.

3. Outside of Nicosia, fighting continued on the night of 25 December in the port city of Larnaca. The rest of the island is reported tense but quiet. Several British nationals have been wounded or killed. Thus far no Americans have been reported as casualties.

4. Both sides have blamed the other for refusal to abide by previous cease-fires. Possession of the Nicosia radio station and a virtual monopoly on the dissemination of handouts to the foreign press has given the Greek Cypriots the ability to control most information leaving Cyprus. Ankara has launched a violent press attack against Greek Cypriot "gangsters."

5. On 24 December the Turkish Government proposed joint military intervention on the island by British, Greek, and Turkish forces. When this proposal got a chilly reception from London and Athens, Ankara threatened to intervene unilaterally unless attacks on Turkish Cypriots ceased. This threat was underscored on 25 December when the Turkish Air Force sent three jet fighters over Nicosia in what Turkish

Foreign Minister Erkin termed a "warning." Later in the day Turkish naval units showed up off the northern coast of the island and part of the 650-man Turkish garrison on Cyprus left barracks to move into one of the Turkish areas in Nicosia.

6. Makarios promptly ordered his ambassador to the United Nations to protest the action of the Turkish air and fleet units before the Security Council. The move of the Turkish soldiers on Cyprus was countered by the move of a part of the 950-man Greek contingent into Greek Cypriot residence areas.

7. Ankara's threats of unilateral action may have forced a re-evaluation of the situation in London and Athens. Late on 25 December, Nicosia radio announced that following a decision by the governments of Britain, Greece and Turkey, the military forces of the three powers stationed on Cyprus would be placed under the unified command of a British officer for the restoration of order on the island.

8. The British Defense Ministry has announced that 150 additional British troops will be sent to Cyprus on 26 December.